

State Dept. review completed

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TOP SECRET SENSITIVE 021010Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNELS (BUNKER)
 FROM: GENERAL HAIG SAIGON 0173 FLASH
 TOJC THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
 HAIG TO 008

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

ARMY review completed.

SECTION ONE OF TWO

I HAVE JUST COMPLETED A TWO HOUR AND FORTY MINUTE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT THIEU. THE FIRST HOUR AND ONE-HALF WAS CONDUCTED ON A HEAD-TO-HEAD BASIS. I AGREED WITH THIEU TO HAVE MR. NHA JOFFHE THE LAST HOUR AND TEN MINUTES DURING WHICH THE SPECIFIC NEGOTIATING COUNTER-PROPOSALS WERE DISCUSSED. AMBASSADOR BUNKER ALSO JOINED FOR THIS PORTION OF THE MEETING.

DURING THE HEAD-TO-HEAD, I COVERED IN GREAT DETAIL OUR CONCERNS ABOUT MANIFESTATIONS OF GROWING SOUTH VIETNAMESE SUSPICION, REITERATED THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FOUR YEARS AND NOTED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. DOMESTIC CLIMATE IN 1968 AND TODAY. I LAYED OUT IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE CONSEQUENCES OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE THREATS FOR PUBLIC PARTING OF THE WAYS AS WELL AS THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNREASONABLE INTRANSIGENCE. I MADE IT CLEAR THAT OUR CONCERNS FOR A FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATING STANCE WERE DICTATED BY LONG TERM CONSIDERATIONS WHICH INVOLVED OUR ABILITY TO SUPPORT THE GVN IN THE LONG HAUL AND WERE NOT DRIVEN BY IMMEDIATE ELECTION NEEDS. THIS PORTION OF THE MEETING WAS EMOTIONAL AND EVEN TEARFUL ON THIEU'S PART. HOWEVER, IT CONCLUDED BY WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT ON BOTH SIDES. THIEU APPEARED TO ACCEPT BOTH MY ADMONITIONS AND WARNINGS WITH SINCERITY AND GOOD WILL. DESPITE THE TOUGHNESS AND THREATENING NATURE OF PORTIONS OF MY PRESENTATION, HE WAS BOTH DOCILE AND COOPERATIVE FROM THE OUTSET.

THIEU EXPLAINED IN GREAT DETAIL HIS CONCERN THAT WHATEVER NEGOTIATING INITIATIVES HE AGREED TO MUST NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE MORALE OF HIS FIGHTING MEN WHEN MADE PUBLIC. HE STATED THAT THE EXPERIENCES OF 1968 LEFT DEEP SCARS IN THE BODY POLITIC OF SOUTH VIET-NAM AND THAT DESPITE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND THEIR FIGHTING MEN COULD NOT HELP BUT REMAIN SUSPICIOUS OF U.S. MOTIVES.

AFTER LISTENING TO THIEU'S EXPLANATION, I CONCLUDED THAT HE GENUINELY EXPECTED THAT MY MISSION HAD BEEN CONCOCTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASKING HIM TO STEP DOWN. HIS RATIONALE, WHICH HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN PREPARED BEFOREHAND, FOCUSED ON THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCH A STEP. I STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT HIS MEETING WITH THE SECURITY COUNCIL THIS MORNING HAD BEEN CONVENED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE AND TO OBTAIN THEIR BACKING IN THE EVENT THAT HIS FEARS WERE REALIZED. THIEU DID REITERATE HIS INTENTION TO STEP DOWN IF AND WHEN A TRUE PEACE WERE IN THE OFFING. IT IS CLEAR THAT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE ARRIVED AT THIS POINT AT THIS TIME.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

EXCLUS

EYES ONLY

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

1972 OCT 2 AM 8 18

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T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE 021010Z OCT 72 VIA CAS CHANNE

X (BUNKER)

FROM: GENERAL HAIG SAIGON 0173 FLASH
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER
HAIG TO 008

FINAL SECTION OF TWO

I STRESSED WITH THIEU THAT WHILE WE HAD HELD
FIRM SINCE THE SEPTEMBER 15 MEETING, BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND YOQ

CONSIDER HANOI'S SEPTEMBER 26 PROPOSAL TO REPRESENT A MAJOR
CONCESSION AND THAT WHILE IT IS STILL UNSATISFACTORY IN MANY DETAILS,
~~SEPTEMBER 23~~ 26 PROPOSAL DEMANDED A FORTHCOMING RESPONSE FROM
WASHINGTON AND SAIGON. I TOLD HIM OF THE TENTATIVE TIME SCHEDULE
IN PARIS AND THE NEED TO RETURN HOPEFULLY ARMED WITH HIS CONCURRENCE
TO EXPLORE FLEXIBLY THE NUMEROUS VARIATIONS OF THE CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY ROUTE. BARRING THIS I INSISTED THAT WE MUST HAVE, AS A
MINIMUM, HIS CONCURRENCE TO TABLE THE MODIFIED VERSION OF OUR
SEPTEMBER 15 PROPOSAL.

IN MY OWN JUDGMENT, THIEU WAS GREATLY RELIEVED THAT I HAD NOT
COME TO ASK FOR HIS RESIGNATION. CONSEQUENTLY, BOTH HE AND NHA WERE
COOPERATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE IN DISCUSSING ALL OF THE DETAILS OF
THE TWO COUNTER-PROPOSALS AND THEIR VARIATIONS. IN HINDSIGHT, IT WAS
WISE TO HAVE NHA PRESENT FOR THE DETAILED DISCUSSION SINCE HE
APPEARED TO PICK UP ALL OF THE NUANCES WHILE AVOIDING ANY SEMBLANCE
OF THE NITPICKING WHICH I HAD EXPECTED.

THIEU AND NHA BOTH SEEMED CONCERNED ABOUT THE SHORT RESPONSE
TIME IN PROVIDING AN ANSWER BY TUESDAY NIGHT. THIEU ASKED WHETHER
OR NOT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO HOLD HERE UNTIL NOON WEDNESDAY,
POINTING OUT THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR HIM TO NOT ONLY REVIEW
CAREFULLY THE ENGLISH TEXT, BUT TO FORMULATE PRECISELY HOW IT
WOULD BE PRESENTED IN VIETNAMESE. HE ALSO ASKED THAT HE BE
PROVIDED WITH THE VIETNAMESE TEXT OF THE SEPTEMBER 26 HANOI PROPOSAL
SO THAT HE COULD SAY PRECISELY HOW THE TERM "UNANIMITY" WAS
ARTICULATED. FROM THIS QUESTION, I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT HE, TOO,
RECOGNIZES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HANOI'S CONCESSION.

ON BALANCE AND CONSIDERING THE ATMOSPHERE WHICH EXISTS HERE, I BELIEVE THE MEETING TO HAVE BEEN HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HOWEVER, WHETHER HIS IMMEDIATE RELIEF RESULTING FROM MY FAILURE TO ASK FOR HIS RESIGNATION WILL SUBSEQUENTLY BE TRANSLATED INTO A FAVORABLE POSITION WITH RESPECT TO OUR INITIATIVES. THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT WE HAVE GIVEN THIEU A LARGE BONE TO CHEW ON WITH MINIMUM TIME TO RESPOND. I THINK HE UNDERSTANDS PRECISELY WHAT THE STAKES ARE AND WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE FROM HIM. I HAVE COMMITTED YOU TO AN IMMEDIATE VISIT WITH HIM FOLLOWING THE NEXT PARIS SESSION IF HE ENDORSES A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ROUTE.

AT THIS POINT, I CANNOT PREDICT WHAT POSITION HE WILL TAKE. IN OUR HEAD-TO-HEAD, HE NOTED THAT THE TALKS IN PARIS HAD PROGRESSED TO THE POINT WHERE HE COULD NO LONGER FAIL TO SHARE THEIR IMPLICATIONS WITH HIS ADVISERS. THIS MAY OCCASION ADDITIONAL DIFFICULTIES AND DELAYS. HOWEVER, I DO BELIEVE THAT THIEU FEELS HE MUST PROVIDE US WITH A SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE BEFORE MY DEPARTURE. IN VIEW OF HIS RELIEF ON THE RESIGNATION CONCERN, I BELIEVE HE WILL APPROACH THE TASK WITH A CONSTRUCTIVE FRAME OF MIND. IN HINDSIGHT, OUR WISEST DECISION WAS TO LIMIT MY PRESENTATION TO THE PARAMETERS WE DISCUSSED PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE AND IN YOUR SUBSEQUENT CABLES. WHILE AWAITING THIEU'S REPLY, I WILL WORK WITH WEYAND TO GET A FIRM GRASP ON THE LOGISTICS SITUATION. I WILL ALSO DISCUSS FURTHER WITH WEYAND THE LOGISTIC TARGETING WHICH BASED ON EARLIER DISCUSSIONS DOES NOT NEED MUCH PUSH. DISCUSSIONS WITH WEYAND AND VOGT, HOWEVER, CONFIRM THE INSANITY OF CURRENT COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS AND THE URGENT NEED TO CLEAR THEM UP EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 8. I AM NOW CONVINCED THAT THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH OUR AIR EFFORT IN THE NORTH ARE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THIS WHOLLY INADEQUATE COMMAND STRUCTURE.

I BELIEVE AMBASSADOR BUNKER, WHO HAS BEEN OF INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE AS USUAL, IS VERY PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THIS MORNING'S DISCUSSIONS.

WARM REGARDS.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

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